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Extensions of country programmes in the Africa Region

Note by the Executive Director

Summary

The present note contains information on the one-year extensions of the country programmes for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Rwanda and Togo.

In accordance with established procedures, the Executive Director approves the first one-year extension of a country programme, while requests for extensions for a second year or two-year extensions are submitted to the Executive Board for approval.

The Executive Board may wish to take note of the one-year country programme extensions for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Rwanda and Togo, as indicated in the attached table.

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One year extensions of country programmes approved by the Executive Director

Country	Original programme period	Year proposed for extension	Reason and Explanation		
			United Nations harmonization	In-country political development	Implementation and/or other Issues
Democratic Republic of the Congo	2002-2006	2007	The harmonization of programme cycles is planned for 2008. The Executive Committee agencies of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) have therefore requested one- or two-year programme extensions. UNFPA is also extending its programme for one year, through the end of 2007.	The country has been engaged in the political transition process since 2003. The organization of general elections is now expected to take place in June 2006. Initially, elections were to have taken place in 2005, which led the United Nations system to suspend its common country assessment (CCA)/United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) process, in order to respond to the national priorities as determined by a democratically elected government.	The need for assistance in the area of population and development remains great for the following reasons: (a) The lack of baseline data for monitoring development plan indicators. The only general population census of the country took place in 1984. (b) The total fertility rate is among the highest on the African continent, with an average of 7 children per woman. Twenty per cent of girls become mothers before age 20. (c) The utilization of modern contraceptive methods is weak (4.4 per cent) and sociocultural obstacles are numerous. (d) Maternal mortality remains very high at 1,289 deaths per 100,000 live births. (e) HIV prevalence is 5 per cent. Programme outputs to be achieved during the one-year extension remain the same as those formulated for the 2002-2006 programme.

One year extensions of country programmes approved by the Executive Director

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Lesotho	2004-2006	2007	The UNFPA country programme is being extended until the end of 2007 for the following reasons: (a) to enable better implementation of the programme; and (b) to facilitate the synchronization of the UNFPA-supported programme with the programmes of partner UNDG agencies in Lesotho (UNDP, UNICEF and WFP).	In 2002, Lesotho embarked upon a new electoral model that guarantees wider representation in the political system. In order to deepen democracy, Lesotho held its first-ever local government elections in 2005. This is expected to promote decentralized administration. Thirty per cent of the seats in the above elections were allocated to women. This demonstrates the commitment of the Government to gender equity. Preparations are under way for a national population and housing census (2006) and national and local government elections (2007).	Progr[illegible]mme support will be directed at critical preparatory activities of major interventions in the fourth country programme and other initiatives, including the 2006 population and housing census; implementation of the reproductive health commodity security strategy; and the Lesotho road map for the reduction of maternal mortality.
Malawi	2002-2006	2007	UNDP, UNICEF and WFP are also extending their country programmes for one year.	The Government of Malawi has just completed its new poverty reduction strategy document, the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy. The document will be finalized by the end of March 2006. The United Nations country team wishes to ensure full synchronization of United Nations country programming with the government planning process. The delay in the finalization of the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy has affected the United Nations planning process.	Several local donors such as the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom, the European Union and the World Bank are also adjusting their country planning schedules to match the national time line.

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Rwanda	2002-2006	2007	The one-year extension of the current country programme is required in order to harmonize the UNFPA programme cycle with UNDP and other United Nations country team agencies that are also extending their programmes for one year.	The country is in the process of developing a new economic development and poverty reduction strategy for the next five years. All United Nations agencies and development partners will align their new country programmes to this cycle. The economic development and poverty reduction strategy process is expected to be completed in March 2007; implementation is to begin in 2008.	The one-year extension of the country programme will enable UNFPA as well as other United Nations partners to harmonize their cycles with the new programming process of the Government and to take into account the priorities identified in the economic development and poverty reduction strategy as well as the new aid policy. Due to the new internal administrative structure of provinces and districts, the Government will likely request UNFPA to expand its current area of intervention to cover the whole of the Western province and, eventually, the whole of the Eastern province.
Togo	2002-2006	2007	UNFPA, UNDP and UNICEF have a harmonized programme cycle covering the period 2002-2006, and are jointly proposing one-year programme extensions, through 2007.	The death of President Eyadema in February 2005 unleashed a political power struggle; a constitutional and post-presidential electoral crisis; and the subsequent formation of a coalition government. As a result, the United Nations country team agencies decided to extend their country programmes by one year, through 2007. This will enable studies to be undertaken focusing on the socio-political and security situation, and the socio-economic vulnerability of the population. Based on the results of the studies, the United Nations country team and other stakeholders will readjust their priorities and strategies to address the new dynamics created by the crisis.	The current country programme provides an adequate framework for all UNFPA-supported projects being implemented in Togo.